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## Dalrymple, Officials Break Ground on Two Bypass Projects to Enhance Traffic Movement in Western North Dakota

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BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Jack Dalrymple today was joined by North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Director Grant Levi and other state and local officials to break ground on two bypass projects that will enhance traffic movement in western North Dakota. The state will provide more than \$190 million to construct the two projects as a way to reduce truck traffic in the communities of Williston and Alexander.

"We are committed to continuing to address the impacts of rapid growth in western North Dakota, and a key part of those efforts is to ensure that the region's roadways are safe and the truck traffic on its Main Streets is reduced," said Dalrymple. "These two bypass projects are top priorities for our state and important infrastructure investments for Williston and Alexander. They will bring much-needed traffic relief to these communities and enhance the safety of area roadways."

The Williston Truck Reliever Route is a four-lane roadway project northwest of Williston that will provide a permanent bypass for the community. The 13-mile project will improve traffic flow through Williston and areas west of the city and will help meet the forecasted traffic demand for the area. The bypass is estimated to cost more than \$162 million and will be constructed over the next two construction seasons. The first phase of the project has been bid and construction will begin this spring. Work on phase two will begin later this year and will be completed in 2015.

In August 2012, the state completed a temporary bypass for Williston, providing alternate routes on both the west and east sides of the city. The temporary bypass has been diverting trucks to Williston's outer edges, easing traffic congestion and enhancing roadway safety.

The Alexander Truck Bypass will re-route US Highway 85 to the west of Alexander, enhancing safety and traffic movement for the community. The \$28 million project will be built to accommodate four lanes of traffic and will be approximately 3.7 miles long. The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2014.

According to Dalrymple, nearly 12,000 vehicles drive on US 85 through Alexander each day, with over 2,000 of those being trucks. "This investment in Alexander and the US 85 corridor will bring many transportation improvements to the area," said Dalrymple.

"The state is dedicated to helping communities such as Williston and Alexander deal with the impacts of rapid growth," said Levi. "These new truck bypass projects will provide alternative routes for trucks around these communities and help to enhance the quality of life for the region's citizens."

The 2013 and 2014 construction seasons are two of the largest road construction programs in state history, with over \$800 million being bid out in roadway projects each year. In addition to the Alexander and Williston bypasses, the department will begin work on the Watford City Southeast Bypass and the New Town Bypass. Work will continue on large-scale projects that began last year, including the four-lane project on US 85 between Williston and Watford City, and the Watford City Southwest Bypass.

In all, the state will invest about \$2.6 billion to support the state's oil and gas region during the current biennium. The state commitment – more than twice the amount of the previous, two-year funding package of about \$1.2 billion – includes funding for highway, county and township road improvements; water supply and water treatment projects and the development of affordable housing. Other state commitments include stationing more Highway Patrol troopers in western North Dakota; enhancements to the region's court system and funding for dust suppression projects.